

# **Connections 2030 Citizen Survey**

## **Executive Summary**

for  
The Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
by  
Real World Research, LLC  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A computer-assisted telephone interview was conducted with 1,100 Wisconsin adults in April and May, 2004. The survey was conducted to gather information relevant to the development of Connections 2030, a long-range, multimodal state transportation plan. The study used a disproportionate sampling plan to ensure representation for each county, adequate representation of racial and ethnic minorities, and relative representation by age group. Results were weighted to account for sampling and response rates. The results reported here are statistically representative of the state of Wisconsin.
- Nearly 90 percent of all respondents were very or somewhat satisfied with the state's overall transportation system. Respondents identified road maintenance, traffic and congestion, and transportation alternatives as the most important transportation issues facing the state.
- Nearly 80 percent of respondents said that having well-maintained roads and bridges was very important to the quality of life of them and their families. Other important goals included having safe sidewalks and pedestrian crossings, improving highway safety, and having safe bicycle and pedestrian routes to school.
- Being able to take care of daily needs and traveling between cities in Wisconsin without a car were more important goals for communities of color, older people, and relatively low income people than for the population as a whole. Conversely, the relative importance of having a say in decisions that affect respondents was lower for many of the groups who have been traditionally underrepresented in planning processes. Similarly, many of these groups also ranked the importance of reducing the impact of transportation projects on the environment and having safe bicycle routes lower than respondents as a whole.
- While traffic and congestion was identified as a major issue in the state, most respondents did not perceive congestion in their area as worse than in other areas and generally felt that traffic was less of a problem in Wisconsin than in other states in the US. There was strong support (68 percent) for maintaining about the same use of traffic management methods such as freeway service patrols, electronic message signs, highway advisory radio stations, and alternative route designations as currently employed.
- Speed and alcohol were identified as the two biggest threats to safety on roads and highways, followed by distracted or bad drivers. The most common suggestions to improve safety included increased patrols and enforcement, stronger laws, increased road maintenance, and improved driver education and testing. A small majority of respondents believed that stiffer penalties (55 percent) and writing more tickets (60 percent) would cause people to drive more safely over time.
- Respondents agreed that WisDOT met their local transportation needs (87 percent); works well with local transportation departments (85 percent); and cares about opinions of people like them (69 percent). They also agreed that local governments and agencies created effective regional transportation plans in their area (79 percent). Hispanic, Asian, Native American and African-American respondents were more likely to agree that "opinions of people like me matter to the DOT" than white respondents (92, 85, 82 and 82 percent respectively compared to 68 percent).
- A clear majority supported developing transportation centers in major Wisconsin cities (64 percent); an expanded passenger rail system (63 percent); and separate truck lanes on heavily traveled highways (61 percent). There is little support for a user-fee system that would charge people a fee based on how many miles they actually drive on state roads and highways (34 percent).
- A large majority of respondents felt it was more important to focus transportation projects where needed rather than balancing them across the state (74 to 26 percent). Respondents would choose a

resurfacing project over one to expand capacity (59 to 41 percent), but would choose to expand capacity over developing a road for economic development purposes (71 to 29 percent). Residents were evenly divided over whether to increase options for non-drivers or make it easier for drivers to get where they are going. Similarly, respondents were evenly divided between enhancing the natural environment or reducing overall project costs.

- The majority of respondents made the majority of their trips driving alone in a car or truck. The most commonly used alternatives were carpooling and walking, followed by public transportation and bicycling.